

177.  
A P L E A  
FOR THE OLD, AGAINST THE NEW, IN EDUCATION.

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AN  
A D D R E S S

DELIVERED AT THE CLOSE OF THE  
A N N U A L    E X A M I N A T I O N  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN HIGH SCHOOLS,

AT GREENWOOD, ABBEVILLE DISTRICT, S., C., AUGUST 2ND, 1850.

.....  
BY REV. A. A. PORTER.  
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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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*Greenwood, Aug. 2d, 1850.*

REV. A. A. PORTER,

*Dear Sir :*

THE Trustees of the Presbyterian High School, at this place, through the undersigned, their Committee, would thus tender you the thanks of that body for the very able, and highly practical Address, delivered at the close of their examination to-day, and respectfully request a copy for publication.

Your obedient servants,

JAMES GILLAM, JOHN McLEES, JOHN LOGAN, JAMES CRESWELL.	}	<i>Committee.</i>
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*Greenwood, Aug. 3d, 1850.*

GENTLEMEN :—

My Address having been delivered at the request of the Board of Trustees, whom you represent, I consider it as their property and at their disposal. As soon, therefore, as I can prepare it for the press, I will place a copy of it at your command.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

A. A. PORTER.

GEN. JAMES GILLAM, REV. JNO. McLEES,

DR. JNO. LOGAN, JAMES CRESWELL, Esq.—*Committee.*

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## ADDRESS.

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I AM THE SON OF A SCHOOLMASTER. I have been one myself. Brought up in the school-room, I was early apprenticed to that honorable profession and initiated in its art and mystery. When I was older and became a teacher on my own responsibility, I made the business of my calling a matter of most careful thought, reading and study. Ever since, it has been to me a subject of the deepest interest. I have continued to read and to think concerning it ; have studied theories and modes of teaching, and have observed and compared plans and results. And with opportunities for observation considerably extensive, if not long continued, I think I have been able to learn a good deal about it on the sure grounds of fact and experience.

I make these egotistical remarks, in order to justify the freedom and confidence with which I intend to speak of education. I know well, for I have felt that honorable professional sensitiveness with which teachers justly receive the impertinent and presumptuous lectures on this subject, so often volunteered by those who know nothing about it ; and I have learned to feel too much indignant contempt for the conduct of men, who, of one profession, assume to expound the duties of another which they never studied, and in which they have had no experience, to be guilty of the folly and arrogance of imitating it. I trust, then, I shall be permitted to speak of the schoolmaster's calling, as myself one of the fraternity ; with as much indulgence from these teachers present, as they would accord to one another ; while, at the same time, I may claim to speak as a disinterested witness, for I am no longer a teacher. And I desire to descend from the dignity and stiffness of a formal address, and to speak with that plainness and point which men in earnest always em-

ploy about a practical subject. There is rhetorical flummery enough current amongst us, to excuse me from attempting to produce any more.

The world is full of excellent theories and wise proverbs, on all subjects. On none do they more abound than on that of education. And were we to believe all we hear, we should suppose there are more ways to educate children properly, and more persons able to do it, than there are children to be educated. The wisest and most confident philosophers, on this subject, are not to be found among teachers themselves ; for all who have never taught a school, usually know how it should be taught, better than the experienced ; just as a bachelor's children are always better managed than any others.

And the truth is, there is a great deal of imposture and empiricism among the professors of the art of teaching themselves. This is not the fault, however, of that honorable profession. The reason why there are quacks in any business, is because the people encourage quackery. The world patronises imposture and experiment ; else there would be none. It is just as true in teaching as in any thing else, that the *supply* will be according to the *demand*. And if novelties and high-sounding pretensions are popular and *pay well*, men will be found ready and able to present them at a moment's warning.

I have no new theory, on the subject of education, to offer. I have made no grand invention or discovery, unless it be the discovery that our fathers understood the subject about as well as we do ; and that the pretended improvements of the day, in so far as they affect principles and systems, and not mere details, are a vanity and a lie. I have no toleration for radical innovators in the delicate business of training immortal minds. The physician who tries experiments with the lives and health of his patients, is justly and unsparingly condemned. Far less indulgence should be given him who plays charlatanical pranks with the souls and mental well-being of his pupils. The civilized world, after three thousand years experience in the art of education, can be taught little by the upstarts of to-day. And the noisy

heralds of new methods have generally an object,—either to conceal essential defects in themselves, or to practice on the credulity of a confiding public. Some years ago, an impudent adventurer made a descent on the quiet people of a neighboring district, and established among them an academy, on some new plan, with a pompous name and much pretension. He professed to teach six things in the time usually devoted to one, and for a short season largely enjoyed the favor and patronage of the community. But after having gulled and swindled the people, taught their children nothing and made them pay well for it, he suddenly disappeared between the close of one day and the dawn of another.

Education is a necessity in a civilized society ; and the different degree of it, possessed by any community, or individuals, mark and determine their grade in civilization. Man, untaught and untrained, is a savage. The more complete his education, the more comprehensive in extent, and the more perfect in detail, the nearer does he come to the model of that ideal man, whom humanity dreams of and struggles after. The end of education is to form man ; to fit him for his duties ; to prepare him for his high privileges and destiny ; to make him a more perfect and a more happy being. Next to the *salvation* of the soul, its *education* is its most important and essential concern. After the profession which regards the eternal destiny of man, that of the teacher is the noblest and most momentous. Others have to do with the temporary and accidental interests of man ; the business of that is with his immortal soul. Others are concerned with his circumstances ; that deals with the man himself, and makes or mars him. The victorious warrior wins a hundred battles, and triumphs over nations prostrate at his feet. The statesman rules empires and guides the destiny of the world. But the teacher fashioned them both ; and taught the general to conquer, and the ruler to govern.

There prevails a wide and fundamental misconception of the nature and design of right education. By many it is confounded with the mere acquisition of knowledge. They suppose the object of the teacher to be just to impart information to his pupils. And he who can, in a given time,

cram into them the greatest quantity of the mere forms and facts to be found in books, is counted the most successful teacher. This is a vital mistake. If man were all *memory* it might do. But as we are constituted, it is just as if you were to take a child and make one member of his body grow and enlarge, while the others are left to dwindle and dry up. It is not the first and main design of education to communicate knowledge. That is only incidental and accessory. Its object is to perfect the immortal mind itself; to form and fashion the soul; to develope and discipline its powers; to draw out and rectify and strengthen its faculties, and to teach how to use them. Its design is to teach the pupil how to think, to reason, to remember, to argue, to understand; to refute error, to discover truth, to perceive right, and to choose goodness. It aims not to teach knowledge, but how to acquire knowledge, and to use it with advantage after it is acquired. To educate a child properly, is to develope and train his judgment, reason, memory, taste, conscience and heart. It is to endue him with a sound, strong, clear, upright and generous mind. To conduct him through a round of books, and succeed in getting him to repeat perfectly their contents, may make a pert, loquacious parrot of him; but it will never produce that thinking, enlightened, clear-headed, large-hearted being, strong and ready for every duty of a man, which a rightly educated person ought to be, and always is.

A right understanding of the nature and design of education, shows that every parent ought to educate his children as perfectly as possible. The people have a well-founded contempt for what they call *book-learning*. There are more contemptible things in the world, but not many of them. A head stuffed with all the books of the world, would not be worth one mind taught to think and reason, and judge and distinguish, in the school of experience, without reading a letter of the printed page. But let the people once understand the real nature and object of a right education, and they will admit its value and obligation. They will seek it for their children, at cost and sacrifice. They will feel bound in conscience and affection, to prepare those they have



brought into the world to perform their part in it as well as possible, and to neglect no means to make them as good and as perfect as they can be made. Nothing, indeed, can be plainer than that a parent is solemnly bound to give his child the very best education that can be obtained. Many suppose a thorough education to be desirable only for those who are intended for the learned professions. If a parent mean his son to be a lawyer, a divine or a physician,—why, then it is supposed to be necessary to give him what is called a complete education. But if he intend him to follow some other calling, that is considered altogether superfluous; and a slight acquaintance with those ancient and respectable sciences, reading, writing and arithmetic, and, perhaps, a smattering of geography and grammar, are thought quite sufficient. But how plainly wrong is an opinion like this! In the first place, it is not right to determine a child's occupation for life, before the age when young men usually graduate in college. What parent has a right to doom his child to a more ignoble life, when he has capacities for another? What parent has a right to deny his child, at least, the opportunity of distinction in the liberal professions? It is unjust to the child, unwise and impracticable to decide so soon what is to be his vocation in the world. Who can tell what changes may happen before the decision can be carried into execution? or how circumstances may hereafter vary, or make the parent wish he could vary, his plans and purposes for his children? It requires the actual experiment and trial of a good education to prove what a child is competent for. Oftentimes, the one designated by parental partiality for a learned profession, is found to be the dunce of the whole flock; while others are consigned to manual or mercantile toil, who might have led in senates, or shed lustre on the mysteries of science.

And a right education qualifies its possessor for the better and more successful pursuit of any calling in life. Whatever work or business requires thought, judgment, invention, foresight and sagacity, is managed better by one who has had his mental powers developed and cultivated by the discipline of a thorough education. Those who denounce the

study of the ancient languages, who ridicule logic, and think the higher mathematics no better than the black art, do not know or consider, that though we do not make bargains in Latin, or talk Greek in the market, or manage plantations by syllōgisms, or compute interest, premiums and dividends by conic-sections—yet the man whose mental powers have been enlarged and drilled and sharpened by such studies, is thereby made a wiser and more skilful man of business. It is true, men succeed in all departments of life, without a thorough education ; but they would have succeeded all the better and the more easily, if they had enjoyed that advantage—not mere *book-learning*, but that right education which trains and perfects the faculties of the mind. Such a man, after a little experience, will guide the plough, and if he must, black his boots, and build his log cabin, more skilfully than others. Educate a child as he ought to be educated, and though he may never have actual use for any of the book-knowledge you have taught him, or though he forgets it, every syllable, he will still be all the better for the labor bestowed upon him. It is not entirely lost. Wholesome nourishment and exercise for the mind, are like the same for the body. They are taken up, and enter into the constitution, and impart to it health and strength and capacity for the exertions it may be called on to make, or the trials it may be doomed to suffer. And mere native power and strength are not sufficient. They need to be trained and cultivated ; to combine with them skill and art. “What is the awkward gait of the unpracticed to the fairy steps of the elastic dancer, or the arrowy flight of the racer ? What the cleaver-like blows of a raw recruit to the lightning point of the swordsman ? Trained skill in weakness shall easily foil the giant efforts of rude strength. A child, by the aid of his hands, can in many things excel an ox ; and as hands are to the body, so is the art of thinking to the soul.”\*

One of the delusions of the day, is the demand for a more *practical* system of education. Many cry out for something

\*Teaching a Science, and the Teacher an Artist—by the Rev. R. B. Hall—a captivating book to a teacher of the old school, which has tempted me several times to borrow its strong words and happy illustrations.

which, in their phrase, "is of some *use*." Utility is the standard of value; and the test of utility, is the capacity of being obviously and immediately applied to the making of money. A selfish, and mercenary, and covetous end, determines the kind and degree of education. Arithmetic and book-keeping are enough for some; because they must keep accounts, and cast up sales, and calculate interest. Others may learn chemistry, as they are designed for druggists. The boy may learn surveying, that he may ascertain precisely the boundaries of his estate, or lay out and measure his fields. Here and there, some wish Greek and Latin, just enough to understand the terms and technicalities of law or medicine. Some parents object to declamation and composition, because their child is not intended for public life. And as to the education of girls, I fear it is regarded by most as a mere matter of ornament and fashion—like the gewgaws and baubles which adorn their person—and as having no further uses and relations, except perhaps to the cookery book and the Bible. Hence, no sooner are they released from school and transferred to the drawing room, than their education ceases, and study is at an end. The mind is then devoted to the erudition of the centre table, and cheap literature, the sentimental annual, and Lady's Book, the bombastic romance and fustian poem. Other parents regard the education of their children as a process which must be passed through, without ever caring to think of its nature or object. They expect them to get through their schooling, pretty much as they wish them well over the measles or whooping-cough. The parent supposes his children have to be educated, and the great point is to have the operation over. But the prime test with most is the "*cui bono?*" What *per cent.* will it yield on the investment? And the great argument against an old fashioned, thorough, complete education is, "we see no *use* in it!" The multitude say of it, as the fat knight said of honor—"can honor set a leg? No! Then I'll none of it!" "Man not only begets a son in his own likeness, but contrives to make him keep it; and when the boy grows up, he is no greater or better than his father."

Men ask us what is the use of abstractions and specula-

tions? Why waste time in studies which are never reduced to practice? But the practical cannot exist without the abstract. When the light of day lingers soft and sweet, after the sun itself has sunk beneath the horizon, it would be folly to say, "why, *light* is the thing, what is the use of a *sun*?" But it would be no more absurd than to say, "practice is the thing, what is the use of abstraction?" All right practice is only a true theory acted out. The concrete is only the abstract realized. A hand strong to labor, a heart stout, and full of energy and courage, and a will to do and to suffer all worthy of a man, are useful and practical things in a world like this. But what can they avail without art and skill, without an eye and a mind clear, keen and sagacious? But the utilitarian spirit of the age, invading the domain of the teacher—as it counts nothing too sacred for its meddling—has found men mean and mercenary enough to respond to its demands. To suit "the impatience and impertinence of a money-loving and labor-saving age," teachers, unworthy of their name, have turned quacks; and claiming to have extracted and condensed the essence of physics, metaphysics, morals, literature and all learning, profess so to administer their concentrated compounds of knowledge, that the merest child shall in an incredibly short time, know every thing worth knowing, better than it was ever known before. Happily, in this blessed southern land of ours, we have been comparatively free from this absurd utilitarianism. Book-sellers and peripatetic pedagogues from another quarter, have indeed tried to introduce it among us; but we have been slow to adopt the pretended improvement. Still there is too much of the same spirit every where, and we cannot too earnestly insist upon its folly and danger, and endeavor to explain the true method and design of education. The art of thinking, the possession of a mind trained and taught to the best use of all its powers, is a gift infinitely above the arts and inventions of money getting. It is not for the poor nor the rich; not for the mechanic nor the lawyer; not for the farmer nor the physician; not for the clergyman nor the layman—it is for all. It may, in some degree, be taught to all, and it ought to be. Men are not made only to plant

cotton, manure land, measure goods, add figures and make bargains. Nor are women intended solely to study dressing, follow fashions, ply the needle, make butter, and keep the house. And when weary of all this, it was not meant that they should betake themselves to idleness, frivolity or scandal. It was never intended that immortal beings should follow these things in an unbroken round, year after year, to the end of life, forever occupied with what they shall eat, and drink, and wear, and gain, and lose. Was the god-like spirit made for this? It is a grand mistake to assume that a man's occupation of a worldly nature, is the whole concern of his life, or employs all his time, or includes all his duties and all his pleasures. Miserable would be his condition if it were so. But it is not. He must do more in such a world as this, than fulfil such base ends. Whether a lawyer, a farmer, a physician, or a mechanic, he is moreover A MAN, with the high duties and privileges of a man, which he ought to be able to fulfil and enjoy. The merchant or lawyer is secondary and incidental. The *man* is first and essential. His character as *a man* takes precedence of his character in any other capacity. He is besides, a social being, connected with those around him by a thousand ties, and by the best and tenderest instincts of his nature. He cannot steel his heart against affection, nor shut his eyes to distress, nor close his ear to its cry, nor withhold his hand from its relief. He cannot refuse love and duty to his friends, nor aid to the ignorant, nor help to the destitute. He is a son, a brother, a husband, a father—relations which call out and reward his affections, and also exercise his virtues and talents. He is a citizen of a free republic, and that imposes other claims and responsibilities besides those of his business. He is also a creature subject to infirmities; calamity may overtake him; death will come upon him; he is exposed to temptation; he has evil passions to be overcome; a conscience to be enlightened; a heart to be purified and enlarged; and a soul to be saved. Contrast all these relations and responsibilities, which belong to every individual, with the single and solitary matter of his worldly business, and how do they cover those who clamor for a practical and utilitarian education with shame

and contempt! Right education must prepare man for all these. Its design is to fit him for life, in all its multiplied and complex relations—to form a character, and develop a capacity for all its duties and privileges—to finish and perfect the social, civilized, christian *man* and send him forth to live, not for self and for gain, but as a benefit and blessing to the world.

The education of which I speak, is in the highest and best sense practical and utilitarian. It has a practical value, though it may not teach how to make two pounds of cotton grow in place of one, to double profits in trade, to make a pudding, or to darn a stocking. Is there no use in a mind taught to reason, to invent, to understand clearly and correctly—to trace the connection of causes and effects, to discriminate truth from falsehood, to detect specious sophistries and unfounded pretensions, to refute and confound an error, and to sustain the cause of truth and justice? Is there no practical advantage in an enlightened understanding, a cultivated taste, an enlarged and elevated soul, and a generous heart? Is there no utility in that which enables a man with honorable pride, to say, “my mind my kingdom is,” and stores it with the material of all pure, sweet, holy and exalted enjoyments, and endues it with a power gold could never buy—the power to find within itself a happiness altogether unspeakable and full of wonder?

The education which I advocate requires a thorough and severe process. It demands time and pains. The spirit of the age calls for ease and speed. Now, that the world rolls in majesty over levelled mountains, and annihilates time and space, it has grown restless with every thing which requires patience and labor. Old methods of doing things are too slow and toilsome. Children must bound with one leap, out of the cradle into the school; at another, into College, and then they are full grown men all at once. And the old system of education, which took so much time, and study so severe, and discipline so rigid, and after all, imparted so little useful knowledge—has been discarded by many wise men of our day. To supply its place, a wonderful variety of new plans and systems have been invented and offered to the

world—the analytical, the synthetical, the inductive, the productive, the musical, the American, the North American—the catalogue is endless. They profess to have straightened and smoothed the way of the scholar, removed all difficulties, real and imaginary, and made education so easy that it is actual fun and frolic, if you believe the inventors. The royal road to learning, so long considered apocryphal, has been at last discovered, and pupils are carried along it in coaches of luxurious ease and happy indolence. The severe system of the old school, rod-enforced, self-exerting, spirit-trying, patience-provoking, toil-producing, time-taking, was another thing altogether. It provoked the student, and wearied, and often disgusted him—but it trained him to think, to reason to remember—it taught him patience, and perseverance, and endurance, and self-reliance, and diligence, and activity. If it did not produce literary fops, and infant prodigies, it did *men and women*, strong in soul to battle with the world—to grapple with heresy in religion, or in politics—to encounter trial\* and endure affliction—to master the secrets of nature, and to produce monuments of learning and genius, eternal as the mountains. Its very difficulties helped to secure a main end of education. They compelled to self-exertion and mental toil. If they plagued the mind, they practised it, and by rigid and severe discipline, taught it how to meet impediments and overcome them. The new and easy methods result in mental dissipation, indolence and imbecility. They give no vigor to the intellect, and less of strength to the character. A child fed on sweetmeats, cannot relish and digest plain and wholesome fare. One carried always in the nurse's arms, will have no use of its legs. So boys trained in the new plans, cannot but shrink from difficult studies, however important and necessary, and cannot relish truth unless it be made entertaining and exciting. Many a lazy boy and mistaken parent prefer a teacher, who tells and explains every thing, and carries the child gently and lovingly in his bosom, over all rugged and difficult places. They ought for that very reason, to reject the teacher. The boy thus nursed and indulged, will be a mental baby forever. But every possible effort and contrivance are used to make the process of

education easy and fascinating. The things to be learnt are diluted and disguised, that the child may learn them without knowing it. The misfortune is that he never *does* know it. Morals are taught in fictitious story; religion in romances; philosophy in funny dialogues, and history, geography and science, in games and plays. The medicine of the mind is given in sugar-coated pills; and there seems to be something in the sugar to nullify its influence altogether. It may be well enough to amuse in education as a pastime, and much may be done to make it pleasant without lessening its toil and vigor. But let amusement be made the means of discipline—let it become the system and plan of education, and it becomes an absurdity unutterable. You might as well think of turning the labor of the cotton field into a sport, continued daily from year to year. Children, like all moral and responsible beings, must be taught to find their pleasures and enjoyment in duty and obedience. They must earn the good of learning, as every other good is earned in this world—by the labor and sweat of the brow. Any system of education which obviates that inexorable necessity, in so far, violates the law of our nature. It weakens the mind, and unfits it for the stern and constant struggles of life.

There is another leading principle of modern radicalism, false and fanatical, that deserves to be noticed; the principle, viz: that children are to be taught the reasons and ground of every thing they learn, and ought not to be required to learn that which they cannot understand. This is one of the new lights of our times by which the rising generation are to be made wiser than their fathers, and children metamorphosed into prodigies—prodigies namely, of conceit, shallowness, arrogance and infidelity. *Children* must be taught to *reason*—and at an age when we were digging out and chewing the bitter rudiments of learning, they are *graduating* in philosophy, dialectics, and metaphysics. Hence we have so many easy methods, and dilutions, and simplifiers, and illustrations, for the benefit of these baby reasoners and juvenile graduates—a sort of mental aliment of pap and panada, for infant intellects. Thus we have the “Child’s book of Philosophy”—“Child’s book of Astronomy”—“Child’s



book of the mind"—that is to say of Metaphysics—even the "Child's book of Theology"—and most insufferable of all, "Evidences of Christianity, for children"—as if the child of a christian ought not to be expected to believe Christianity, of course, and as if that Divine Religion must be put upon its proof, as a suspected thing, at the bar of a child's judgment! The whole of this system is unnatural and absurd. A child *cannot* reason. The human mind does not at first abstract, and generalize, and reason; but perceives, observes and remembers. Memory is the faculty first exhibited. Nature, therefore, teaches that that should be first cultivated and trained. To attempt to teach a child to reason and argue, is to attempt to teach it to stand before it can sit; or to walk backwards before it learns to walk forwards. The consequence is, those thus taught generally go in the wrong direction all their lives. But instead of storing the memory with facts, and rules, and principles, while that is the leading faculty, for the after exercise of the judgment and understanding, these nurslings of improved pedagogy are taught to dispute and decide; to suspect all men's wisdom but their own; and to hold nothing sacred from their contempt but their own impertinence and presumption. There are many things which may be well learned, and must be learned, before the reasons of them are, or can be understood. Why labor, for example, with little pictures and balls, and figures to teach a child five years old, the reasons *why* 3 times 4 are 12? Reasons wholly useless for the present, and which will be easily and naturally discovered afterwards.

The principle that a child is to be taught only what he understands and can see the reasons of—is *dangerous*. It subverts the very foundation of human knowledge. It cuts us loose from our moorings, and sends us adrift on the ocean of scepticism, without chart, compass, or rudder. It is utterly inconsistent with our condition in this world of mysteries, where the oldest know but in part, and see through a glass, darkly. For what is there in the wide Universe any man can say he thoroughly comprehends and understands in its ultimate grounds and reasons, in its inmost nature, and in its nearest and remotest relations? The slenderest blade of

grass—the minutest pebble under his feet, shall baffle his pride and arrogance. He cannot tell what makes the one to grow, or what holds the particles of the other together. Ask him about the latter, and perhaps he will babble to you of “cohesive attraction.” Bid him translate his learned jargon into plain English, and behold, it means “they stick together, because they stick to one another!”

Man cannot penetrate one step into the secrets of nature, before he is involved in inextricable mystery. The highest human philosophy only traces a few facts here and there, in the great world of things to be known, and then confesses itself powerless as the merest and weakest ignorance. True science does not pretend to understand and explain. It is humble. Its last and highest lesson, is the inherent and essential weakness of the human mind. Ignorance and stupidity, are proud, and self-confident, and vain glorious—speaking great, swelling words of vanity—desiring to be teachers, but understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

The notion that a child must be taught, and required to believe, only what he can understand and see the reasons of, is contrary to nature, and to the principles our Maker has inwrought into the very elements of our mental constitution. The very first impulse of the infant mind, and therefore, evidently the voice of nature and of God, is *faith*—confidence in authority—reliance upon the opinion of his superiors. The unperverted child believes spontaneously, by natural instinct, on the authority of his betters. And it is only after experience has taught him the falsehood and ignorance of others, that he learns to distrust and doubt. These new lights would therefore engraft the vile and pestilent shoots of depraved and lying humanity, on the incorrupt and healthy stem of nature’s root—do violence to the inborn instincts of man, and contradict the suggestions of the Almighty. Children would never dream of demanding reasons before they can understand reasons, if the besotted ignorance and empty conceit of would-be reformers did not tempt and invite them. The philosophy and reason of things are a study and a task for men, but these innovators would make them a sport for babies.

The radical and reforming spirit of the age has invaded the domain of education, in another respect, with the most deleterious and dangerous designs. I mean in the matter of the government and discipline of the young. The stern and rigorous rule held by our fathers over their children, has been every where cried out against as cruel and barbarous. Rod and rattan are expelled from the parental roof and the teacher's desk, and as a substitute the honied sweetness of coaxing, and not seldom, the low cunning of artful manœuvre, are adopted to cheat the child into the performance of his duty. Some go so far as to affirm the false and pestiferous principle, that he should never be compelled to obedience—that the *reasons* of a command should be explained to him, and his compliance left then to himself. He must sit in judgment on their propriety, and decide how far they are entitled to his respect. Of course he naturally infers that where he cannot see and feel their force, which is commonly the case, there rests upon him no obligation to obey—When the attempt is made to lead him along by the gentle arts of persuasion, he immediately perceives that what he is only persuaded to do, he may let alone if he chooses. It is his liberty and right to resist persuasion. Here is a main source of the evils which afflict our schools and our country. Children thus brought up, learn from the cradle to despise authority—to cast off the restraints of law and government—to resist the control of legitimate power, and to obey only their own passions. They form a habit of insubordination, self-will, and rebellion. Hence our youth are wild, and ungovernable, and lawless—our schools disorderly and idle—domestic government, a thing that was—and every community cursed with men who trample the laws of their country under their feet, and despise all restraint upon their conduct. Men unused to obedience and government in youth, are fretted and galled by them in manhood. Untaught submission at home, they refuse it at school. Not brought into due subjection there, they go forth into the world ready, on the first impulse of passion or interest, to violate the laws of the land. Hence the administration of justice has become so loose and uncertain. Juries screen the criminal and Courts connive at it.

And hence, too, riots, and lynching, and outrage, come so frequently to pass. And our boasted freedom, in many places, has degenerated into a wild and reckless lawlessness, which only the bad love, but all the good fear and hate, worse than despotism. It would be preposterous to expect any other result. An ungoverned child can never make any thing but a lawless man; and a school without strict discipline and efficient government, is only a nursery of rebels and out-laws.

In the hands of a discreet and competent teacher, there will indeed seldom be necessity for resort to that ancient instrument of juvenile discipline, *the rod*; and some children can be well governed altogether without it. But it should always be kept as a last resort—and *known* to be such—a reserved power—a latent engine—to be called forth promptly, decidedly, *feelingly*, at the proper time. The vast majority of children must at times be ruled by compulsion—by force. And their present and eternal happiness requires them to learn to *obey*, to submit, to respect authority and government. A child must be governed *as a child*—and until he can appreciate other motives, and prove it by his conduct, he must be *compelled*, or ruined. Be well assured, ye theoretical gentlemen who have never wielded the ruler, nor flourished the birch, and yet assume to know exactly how to manage the boy—he is not that easy, pliant, non-resisting thing you suppose, to be moulded, and formed, and guided by the gentle breath of persuasive words. He is rather like a mass of rough and stubborn iron in the grasp of the workman's tongs. He requires many a heat in the furnace, and many a turn and twist, and many a hard blow from a strong and skilful hand, before he can be fashioned as we will.

Some silly parents have said, “we had rather our child should die than be whipped!” And the insane wish is often gratified in a murderous affray, or by the public executioner. Those who on slight provocations plant bloody knives in each other's bosoms, or shoot down their friends in the streets, are not those who were properly disciplined at school. He that banishes the rod, supplies the prison with its inmates, and the hangman with his victims.

But it would be an endless task to enumerate the follies and mischiefs which are perpetrated in the matter of education. The greater part of them come from the employment of incompetent persons in the teacher's office. These yield to the mistaken desires, or impose on the credulous confidence of parents or employers. Medicine has its quacks—law, its pettifoggers—divinity its fanatics—and it would be strange if education had not its pedagogues. But the source of the evil lies deeper. In a truly enlightened and liberal community, quackery could not flourish in any profession. When the people estimate too low the value of a good education, or are too miserly to pay its just price, they will get that which is mean and bad, and get it cheap. The maxim is of universal application, "poor pay, poor preach!" Teachers can be got for fifty dollars, but they will be fifty dollar teachers. The cupidity and ignorance which demand cheap education, are the curse of the profession and of the children. They crowd our schools with masters utterly incompetent for their calling. And if circumstances compel a gentleman of proper qualifications to teach, he does so (with a few noble exceptions,) only as a temporary resource, and leaves it as soon as possible, for something else. Hence the great majority of teachers are young men, just out of College, without experience, and without interest, zeal, or ambition in the art, who use it only as a stepping stone to some other profession. The public have no right to complain. They called for cheap education, and it came. They have their choice in this as in every other business, either a high price and good work, or a low price and bad work.

It is preposterous to say that the present rates of a teacher's remuneration are high enough. If we except one, no other profession which requires the same amount of preparation, talent, character, experience, labor and responsibility, and which is charged with interests so precious and important, is so meanly rewarded. And it is equally absurd to pretend that the people are not able to pay higher prices. Many who complain of them, and desire to have them yet cheaper, pay generously for other things, even luxuries.

They squander often on their children's dresses and amusements, more than enough to adorn their minds with the best learning and the most manly virtues. Hundreds of people find money enough for trade, houses, land, furniture, equipage, dress, fashion and superfluities, who, at the bare mention of a tuition fee, begin to whine about hard times. An avaricious desire to increase their property, is the reason often of this niggardly treatment of the teacher. But they forget, or will not understand, that the best property is that education which is so undervalued. The most precious inheritance is that enlightened, cultivated and accomplished mind, which the foolish parent denies his child. And the man who can educate his children well, but is unwilling to pay the price, is as contemptible as he is cruel, and deserves the scorn of the world, when he dares to insult a competent and faithful teacher, "by asking him, in a sneaking tone, to take *less!*" Let us hear no more of poor schools and poor teachers. The public can have good schools whenever and wherever it chooses to pay for them. Poor wages beget poor teachers, and poor teachers cannot make good schools.

In one particular, the signs of the times are full of promise as to our schools. The notion which prevailed a few years ago, that all religion and all Christian instruction ought to be banished from the school-room, is giving way before the progress of better wisdom. The idea, indeed, that a Christian people should have atheistic schools is simply absurd, preposterous and intolerable. If we had no sense to reason against it, the instincts of nature would repel it. No man who duly estimates the value of religious and moral principles, the incalculable influences which the associations of the school exert upon the character, and the difficulty of training up the young in the paths of piety and virtue, with all the helps and appliances we can command, can doubt for a moment the imperative duty of converting the school into an instrument of moral and religious power. The case is too plain for argument. The difficulty has arisen heretofore, partly from the employment of worthless men as teachers, because they could be had *cheap*; partly from a cowardly

yielding of Christian parents to loud-mouthed infidelity ; but chiefly from the sectarian divisions of Christians, and their abominable denominational jealousies. Professed Christians have preferred to have their children at school under *no* religious influence, rather than under that of a rival sect. As if any of our current creeds were not better than none ; and as if no Christian teacher could be found honest enough to teach his pupils that Christianity which is common to us all, without also teaching them his own sectarianism. Alas, for poor human nature ! The only remedy seems to be *denominational schools*. Under present circumstances, the choice lies between them and atheistic, godless schools, and we cannot long debate which of these two to choose. Any form of sectarianism, however bigoted and exclusive and full of selfish zeal, is infinitely better in a school than *no* religion.

It is not my opinion that the attempt should be made in a school to teach the doctrines of religion, by special, direct and express instruction. To some extent, this undoubtedly should be done. But it cannot be carried very far, without interfering with the peculiar duties of the school. For the formal instruction of children in religion, our chief dependence must be on the family and the church. And there may be danger at this time, lest this may be forgotten. Religion should be in the school, not so much in lessons and textbooks, but rather as the air and atmosphere of the place, breathed and felt by all. It should be wrought into the whole texture and routine of duty and discipline. Without being the business of the school, it belongs to all the business. It should mingle with the studies, the rebukes, the chastisements, the rewards, the counsels, the approbation. It should live and breathe in every look, tone, word, and movement of the teacher ; and, by the magnetic power of sympathy, pervade every bosom there. The pupils should see and feel how it is possible to carry into every thing the sweet spirit of a cheerful piety, in every thing to regard the authority of God, and for all to be employed in His service. Besides this, religion should have its altar there, and prayer and thanksgiving be offered up morning and evening. The

authority of God should be publicly appealed to in instruction and discipline, His will recognized and declared, His providence acknowledged and His mercy implored. In every lesson of every study, a Christian teacher will find opportunity to instil Christian truth and principles, and so to imbue all the exercises of the school with the living spirit of Christianity, that the place will be like the house of God, and he himself like a priest of the Most High. He can often make lessons as solemn as sermons, and cause the heart and conscience of his pupil to tremble and grow tender under the power of religious truth, seen, felt and fixed forever.

The all-important thing, is for the teacher himself to be baptised in his own soul with the spirit of deep, tender, ardent piety; to have his heart full of God to overflowing; to realize his responsibilities for the young immortals brought under his influence; to feel the infinite importance of their religious welfare; and to keep ever in view, that coming hour when he and they shall confront each other before the bar of an awful God. Reckless men rush into the school-room, and dare to deal with the principles and powers of immortal souls, as they would toss a foot-ball, or cut and hammer a block of wood. The madmen think not that for every one, they must answer before that Judge, from whom there is no concealment and no escape, and who counts each of them of more worth than a thousand worlds.

When we think of it, it seems amazing that Christian men can entrust the education of their children to irreligious and prayerless teachers. It is a new idolatry of Moloch. They offer up their offspring to the power of the great destroyer, and tempt him to make them his prey. The infatuation which led to the exclusion of religion from our schools, and forbade even the minister of the Gospel, when teaching, to open his lips on the subject, and carefully expurgated every trace of the Gospel from school-books, on a pretended fear of sectarianism, is the most incredible and disgraceful phenomenon ever presented by a Christian people. The worst form of our religion is infinitely preferable to atheism, deism, or infidelity. And any Christian man who would not choose a



teacher for his children from the denomination most opposed to his own, rather than commit them to one who has no religion, can only be considered as cemented in his bigotry. Sectarianism might save the children in a different form of faith and worship from the father. Infidelity would not save them at all. Sectarianism may be error and bigotry. Infidelity is heresy and ruin. Any form of our common Christianity has some elements of truth, piety and salvation, and leaves the hope of eternal life. Infidelity has no vital principle. Its breath is pestilence—its life, death—its influence, deep damnation.

